



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 118th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 169

WASHINGTON, MONDAY, MARCH 27, 2023

No. 55

Senate

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The Senate met at 3 p.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mrs. MURRAY).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

O Lord, our God, we come in thankfulness because You have loved us through the seasons of our lives. We find peace in the knowledge that You know and accept us.

Lord, thank You for enabling us to run and not be weary, to walk and not faint. Continue to keep us in Your care.

Bless our Senators. Surround them with the shield of Your love. When they feel discouraged, increase their faith. Give them wisdom and courage to live each day as Your children.

We pray for those dealing with the deadly aftermath of the Mississippi tornado. We pray also for the victims of the Nashville school shooting.

We pray in Your merciful Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

REPEALING THE AUTHORIZATIONS FOR USE OF MILITARY FORCE AGAINST IRAQ—Resumed

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of S. 316, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 316), to repeal the authorizations of use of military force against Iraq.

Pending:

Schumer amendment No. 15, to add an effective date.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority whip is recognized.

COVENANT SCHOOL SHOOTING

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, today, yet another American community is in shock and grief after yet another American mass shooting. This morning, a shooter entered the Covenant School in Nashville, TN, reportedly armed with two assault rifles and a handgun.

This is an elementary school for students in preschool through the sixth grade. The children are as young as 3 and 4 years old.

Upon entering the school, the shooter opened fire, killing at least three staff members and three students.

I cannot begin to imagine what the families and school community are feeling at this moment. We send our prayers and condolences, and we are certainly grateful to the first responders who were dispatched to the school within minutes and ran toward the sound of gunfire.

But, once again, thoughts and prayers are not enough. These mass shootings, especially targeting little children, are happening with sickening regularity in this Nation. This could be the 129th mass shooting since this year, 2023, began—129 mass shootings in America, and we are fewer than 90 days into this calendar year. That is more than one mass shooting a day.

What is a mass shooting? Four victims either shot or killed in an incident.

Last year, Congress took some important steps on gun safety reform with the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act and the Violence Against Women Act reauthorization. The Judiciary Committee that I serve on has done a lot of work on those measures, and I am happy to support both of them.

But as today's shooting in Nashville, TN, demonstrates, there is more work to be done. The fact that this is a daily occurrence in America is unconscionable.

We are going to learn more details in the hours and days ahead about what actually happened in Nashville, but we already know what must be done to keep our children and communities safe from deadly shootings. I strongly—strongly—support bills that ban assault weapons from civilian use and close gaps in our background check system.

I cannot imagine the Founding Fathers would even envision what we are allowing today in the name of words that they wrote in the Second Amendment to the Bill of Rights. To think that these weapons—the one that was used in Highland Park, in my home State of Illinois, on the Fourth of July, last year—the man discharged 83 rounds in 60 seconds. Tell me that the Founding Fathers had that in mind when they wrote the Second Amendment. I don't believe it.

Today, the early reports are that assault weapons may be involved again. We will wait until we see the actual facts coming in, but it would be no great surprise if that is the case. It would be a grave disappointment.

I urge my colleagues to come together on a bipartisan basis. We can't say that we have solved this problem or even addressed it seriously when the incidents like the one that happened today in Nashville, TN, continue in America.

● This “bullet” symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



Printed on recycled paper.

S943